

with leaders of various political parties on 8th July, 1996 to discuss issues related to conduct of the assembly Elections in J and K. During the meeting, there was a consensus that the Assembly elections in the State should be held at the earliest preferably by September, 1996. Earlier the Prime Minister, during his visit to J and K on July 6, 1996 also had discussions with representatives of political parties in the State, where also there was a similar consensus. The Government are in agreement with this view. The matter has since been taken up with the Election Commission for finalising the exact dates for the Assembly Elections.

[Translation]

Indo-Tibetan Border Police

2249. SHRI BACHI SINGH RAWAT 'BACHDA' : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) the total strength of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police:

(b) whether the ITBP has to discharge the duty of safeguarding the borders in the most adverse geographical conditions;

(c) whether the Government propose to arm the ITBP with the latest weapons; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) Total strength of Indo-Tibetan Border Police is 30,366.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d). ITBP Units have been armed with modern weapons including the undermentioned weapons :

- 7.62 SLR
- 7.62 IMG
- 7.62 MMG
- 7.62 Sniper Rifle Styer
- 9 MM Carbine
- 9 MM Pistol
- AK-47 Rifle
- 7.62 SLR GF Rifle
- 51 MM Mortar
- 81 MM Mortar

[English]

Fertilizer Industries in Orissa

2250. SHRI RANJIB BISWAL : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) the number of fertilizer industries in Orissa running with the assistance of Government;

(b) the number of sick industries out of them; and

(c) the steps proposed to be taken by the Government to revitalise these sick industries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI SIS RAM OLA):

(a) There are two fertilizer plants in Central public sector in Orissa viz. (1) Talcher Plant of FCI, and (2) Rourkela Fertilizer Plant of SAIL.

(b) and (c). The Fertilizer Corporation of India Limited (FCI), which has its coal-based unit at Talcher in Orissa, has been declared as sick by Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR). The revival package for FCI, approved in principle, by the Government envisages fresh investment of Rs. 1736.20 crore, including Rs. 523 crore for front and change from coal to naphtha for Talcher unit.

With a view to minimising the requirement of budgetary support, it has been decided to reformulate the revival package from the standpoint of the Financial Institutions. The final revival package would also require approval of BIFR, which is a quasi-judicial authority. Government has been providing budgetary support to the extent possible, to sustain production at operational plants, including Talcher unit.

SHORT NOTICE QUESTION

Saving-cum-relief Scheme

1. SHRI N.K. PREMACHANDRAN : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have withdrawn their contribution of Rs. 360.00 per person per annum to the 'Saving Cum relief Scheme' for fishermen in Kerala, which was in force since 1991-92; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (EXCLUDING THE DEPARTMENT OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING) (SHRI CHATURANAN MISHRA) : (a) and (b). Instructions were issued to discontinue the Saving-cum-Relief component of the Centrally Sponsored National Welfare of Fishermen Scheme with effect from 1.4.96 as it was considered that alternative employment opportunities available to fishermen during the monsoon period are a better form of assistance than an outright grant of Rs.720 per annum, shared equally by the Central and State Governments. However the department is reconsidering this.

STATEMENT CORRECTING REPLY GIVEN TO UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.2795 DATED 22.8.95 REGARDING RAILWAY BRIDGES.

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : Sir, in reply to part (a) of the Unstarred